16.

THE *Poor Mechanicks* PLEA,

Againſt the

Rich Clergy's OPPRESSION.

SHEWING,

Tithes are no *Goſpel-Miniſters* Maintenance

IN

A Brief and Plain Method, how that TITHES (as now paid) are both inconſiſtent with the Diſpenſation of the *Law*, and Diſpenſation of the *Goſpel*.

Alſo, how they were brought into the Church many Hundred Years after Chriſt, and Teſtified againſt by ſeveral Ancient Chriſtians and Martyrs.

With ſeveral Sober *Reaſons* againſt the *Payment* thereof.

By *J. B.*

Job 35. 9. *By reaſon of the multitude of Oppreſſions, they make the Oppreſſed to cry: They cry out by reaſon of the Arm of the Mighty.*

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THE Preface to the Reader:

OR, THE

Author's Apology for this Book.

ALthough several Books have been Published heretofore, treating of the same Subject, as this small Treatise doth, but far exceeding the limits thereof; yet I am not without hope, but this also may prove a means or help for the Satisfaction of some, that may probably be in Doubt, whether **Tithes**, *as now paid, are warrantable by Scripture for the Maintaining of a Gospel-Ministry: Which Doubt (I think) the Impartial will find removed, or answered, as they seriously peruse the same; although the Stile therein may seem to some to be in a mean and plain manner: But let such know, I am no learned* Academick, *but a poor* Mechanick, *and have endeavoured to be intelligible unto all.*

And if it be liable to the Censure of some of those that may think themselves immediately conterned, when they see their Craft *to be in Danger, let such make it appear that it is contrary to the naked Truth, and far be it from me to Justifie or Maintain the same: But if it appear to be the Truth (as I hope nothing will be found contrary) then I desire it may prevail and prosper over all Falshood and Error.*

Yet I would have none think, that I do believe the whole Body of the Clergy *of* England, *to be equally guilty of* Oppression, *&c. I say nay, but that there are several sober and moderate Men among them, considering their Station; which I desire that the Lord, in his due time, may make able* Ministers *indeed, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; and then they will follow the Example of the* Apostles, *and Minister freely.*

J. Bockett.

THE

THE
Poor *Mechanicks* PLEA, &c.

THE Conſideration of the great *Oppreſſion* and heavy Burden of **Tithes**, that is impoſed upon the *Inhabitants* of this Land, and lieth weightily upon the *Laborious Husband-men* and *Farmers*, that beſtow great Labour and Pains, and alſo are at great Charges in Manuring and Ordering their *Land*, Sowing of their *Seed*, Maintaining of *Servants*, keeping of *Cattle*, great Rents and *Taxes*, &c. and many Caſualties and Hazzards they are liable unto; then patiently waiting the appointed Seaſon, and expecting (through the Lord's Bleſſing) to Reap the Fruit of their *Labours*; but perhaps a quarter (if not more) of their

Profit is raked away by the **Tithe-mongers** Servants: But *Chiefly* this unreasonable Payment of **Tithes** is most heavy and burdensome upon those that for *Conscience* sake cannot uphold or maintain that *Ministry* which takes them, which they believe is not of God. And this is one of the most *Principal* Pillars by which the *National Ministry* is upheld, to wit, **Tithes**.

Therefore, considering this, it is in my Mind to write concerning the same, under these three Heads or *Chapters*.

First, Of the Manner and Nature thereof, and End for which they were given under the *Law*, and their Abolishment.

Secondly, Of the Maintenance of *Christ's Ministers* under the *Gospel Dispensation* in the Primitive Times.

And *Thirdly*, Of the Establishment of *TITHES*, after the *Apostacy* entered, contrary both to *Law* and *Gospel*; with the Testimony of *Ancient Christians* against the same.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the Manner of Tithes, *and the End for which they were given under the* Law, *and their Abolishment.*

TITHES were commanded by the *Lord* under the *Law*, or First *Covenant*, to be paid by *Israel* in the Land of *Canaan*, unto the Tribe of *Levi*; and that any other People or Nation had the like Command to pay them, is not so much as mentioned in *Scripture*; and this only was in and under the *First Covenant:* For this Tribe the *Lord* chose, and set apart for his *Work* and *Service* of the *Tabernacle* and *Office* of the *Priesthood*; for the Lord said, *I have given the Children of* Levi *all the Tenth in* Israel, *for an Inheritance for their Service which they serve, even the Service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, Num. 18. 21. And they had no other Inheritance among their Brethren, *for the Lord was their Inheritance*, Deut. 10. 9. And of the **Tithe** *of the Land, whether the Seed of the Land, or Fruit of the Tree, it was Holy unto the Lord*, Levit. 27. 30. And when

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they had received of their Brethren, the Children of *Israel*, as from the Lord, their *Tithe*, or *Tenth*, they were commanded to *Offer an Heave-Offering of it to the Lord also, even a Tenth part of the Tithe*, Num. 18. 26. And this was the Portion of *Aaron* the *Priest*, for himself and his Sons, even the *Tenth* of the *Tenth*, or an *Hundredth* Part, Num. 18. 19.

So by this it is evident, that the Cause or Reason why the Tribe of *Levi* received **Tithes**, was, *1st.* Because they had no Part, Portion or Lot in the Land, as the other Tribes had. *2dly.* Because it was their daily Work to serve at the *Tabernacle*, and to be *assistant* to the *Priests*, in Killing and Offering of Beasts, *&c.* for Sacrifice; with many other things, too numerous to be here inserted, but may partly be seen in *Numb.* 3, 4, & 8 Chapters.

Moreover, This one Tribe may be thought to be (if not a full Tenth, yet) near a Tenth Part of the People; but they were not to enjoy or possess the full *Tithe*, or *Tenth*, themselves; for the *Widow*, and the *Fatherless*, and the *Stranger* that were within their Gates, were to come and *eat* and be *satisfied*, Deut. 14. 29. For there was not to be a *Beggar* in *Israel*; yet the Poor were not to cease out of the *Land*, Deut. 15. 11.

Now

Now to compare the Manner and Practice of the *National Miniſters*, or **Tithe-mongers** of theſe Days, with the Manner and Practice of the *Levites* and *Prieſts* under the *Firſt Covenant*, as Eſtabliſhed by the *Lord*; I think there are but few ſo blind, but they may ſee a great *Difference* and *Contrariety*.

For obſerve, 1. Here was one whole *Tribe* that took **Tithe**, as the Lord commanded, which may be, as I ſaid, near a *Tenth* Part of the People in the *Land*. But, I believe, the *National Prieſts* are not the *Hundredth* Part of the People in *England*, including their *Wives* and *Children*. Then note, How unreaſonable it is in them, that call themſelves *Goſpel-Miniſters*, to exact and take Ten Times as much by the *Law* of Man (conſidering their Number proportionably) as the *Levites* had given them by the *Law* of *God*, and yet perform not that Service for which they were given.

2. There was no other Tribe to receive *Tithes*, but only the Tribe of *Levi*: But if theſe *Prieſts* were put to prove themſelves of the Linage of *Levi*, and of *Aaron*'s Stock, it would puzzle the ſtrongeſt Brains amongſt them, and be a harder thing for them to do, than by all their Wiſdom and Peruſal of *Ancient Authors* they could perform. So then,

ſeeing

seeing they cannot prove themselves of that *Race* or *Tribe*, let them shew a *Command*, if they *can*, that any other *Tribe* had, to take *Tithe*, throughout the whole *Bible*.

3. The *Levites* had no Inheritance among their Brethren in the *Land* of *Caanan*. But many of the *National Priests* have besides their *Tithes*, *Glebe-Lands*, and some considerable *Estates* in Land, or other ways of *Gain* and *Profit*, sufficient for a Competent Livelihood.

4. The *Levites* or *Priests* were to offer *Satrifice* for themselves, and the Sins of their Brethren, almost continually. But the *Priests* of *England* for their *Tithes*, perhaps may Study a few Hours in a Week to make up a Matter of their own Brain, and not from the Lord, and deliver it unto the People for a *Divine Matter*. For it would not agree with the manner of their *Education*, Personally, to take upon them the Occupation of a *Butcher*, to kill *Bullocks*, *Rams*, *Lambs*, &c. for Sacrifice; neither to be so Laborious, as the *Levites* and *Priests* were under the Law. So then they come short of the *Priests* due, which was *the Shoulder, the two Cheeks, and the Maw*, Deut. 18. 3. but their Stomachs are used to more dainty Fare, for the most Part.

5. The *Tithes* in the *first Covenant* did relieve the *Widow*, the *Fatherless*, and the *Stranger*,

stranger, that there was no begger to be in Israel; but these *National Tithe-mongers* claim all for themselves, so greedy they are of *Gain*, that some of them attain to such a degree of Heighth, that they have several Hundred Pounds *per Annum*; yea, some several Thousands, so desirous they are to enlarge and augment their *Benefices*; and if such out of their *large Reveneues* do voluntarily contribute to the relief of the *Poor*, then perhaps he is called a good charitable Man, although the *Poor* hath as much right to **Tithes** as himself, according to the *Law* of *God*, aforesaid, *Deu.* 14. 29. And if those **Tithes** were now so divided, that the *Poor* of the Nation might have their part to relieve their *necessities*, there would not be that multitude of *poor distressed miserable People* about the Nation as there are; neither need laborious Tradesmen, and mean House-keepers, be *Burdened* with such large Parish-Rates and Assessment towards their Relief, as is very evident they are in several places.

Now if it were possible (as it is not) that the *National Ministers* could make full proof that all things relating to the *first Covenant* they did precisely practice and observe, yet it would not avail them, or vindicate such a practice under the *second Covenant*,

Covenant, or *Goſpel Diſpenſation*; for the *Lord* ſaid by the Mouth of *Jeremy*, *That the days come that I will make a new* Covenant *with the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and with the Houſe of* Judah: *Not according to the* Covenant *that I made with their Fathers in the Day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of* Egypt, *Jer.* 31.31,32.

Now this *New Covenant*, I believe there are none, or but few, but that do own it to be the *Goſpel Diſpenſation*, which was fulfilled when *Chriſt* came and *Suffered*; for the *Author* to the *Hebrews* alludes to the ſame place of *Scripture*, Heb. 8.8,9. and alſo ſpeaks, that if the *firſt Covenant* had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been found for the *ſecond*, for that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as appertaining to the *Conſcience*, Heb. 9. 9, 10. which ſtood only in *Outward* and *Carnal* things; therefore the *Lord* ſaid, I Will make a New One: And *Chriſt* the Everlaſting *High Prieſt*, Heb. 7. 27, 28. came to do his *Father's* Will, and *offered* himſelf up *once* for *all*; *ſo he taketh away the firſt, that he may Eſtabliſh the ſecond*, Heb. 10. 9. and changed the *Levitical Prieſthood, and the Prieſthood being changed, there is made of neceſſity a change alſo of the Law* that was Outward, *Heb.* 7. 12.

for

for *Christ was the End* thereof, *Rom.* 10. 4. in which **Tithes** were included, being a *Jewish Rite* belonging to that *Priesthood*. Now I cannot perceive that any can reasonably suppose, that the **Tithes** (or Wages as I may say) being *Jewish*, that was *due* to the *Levites* for the Work and Service of the *Law* or *first Covenant* should remain in force as *due* to those that never were imployed in that Service, and also not of *Israel*'s stock, especially when all that was *abolished* for which they were given.

But the *second Covenant* which was not according to the *first* (*viz.*) Outward, was, that the *Lord* would put his Law in their inward parts, and *write it in their Hearts*, and there should be a more *Universal Knowledge* of the *Lord*, Heb. 8. 10, 11. for his *Spirit* in this *Gospel Dispensation* of the *new Covenant*, if poured forth upon *Sons* and *Daughters*, Acts 2. 17. as was prophesied by *Joel*, Joel 2. 28. so that the *Christians* can say (as they witness the fulfilling of this promise) *that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them*, Rom. 1. 19. *for they being delivered from the Law (that being dead in which they were held) that they should serve the Lord in newness of Spirit, and*

not

not in the oldneſs of the Letter, Rom. 7. 6.

So it plainly appears that the *firſt Covenant* or *Diſpenſation* of the *Law* that was *Outward*, and chiefly relating to the *Jews*, was aboliſhed by *Chriſt*, and the *ſecond Covenant*, or *Goſpel Diſpenſation*, came to take place, which is *Inward* and *Univerſal* to as many as believe, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, Rom. 10. 12.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Of the *Eſtabliſhment and Maintenance of* Chriſt's Miniſters *under the* Second Covenant *or* Goſpel Diſpenſation.

WHen *Chriſt* ſent forth his *Diſciples* to Preach unto the People, he ſaid, the Harveſt truly is great, but the *Labourers* are few: Pray ye therefore the *Lord* of the Harveſt, that he [mark it is God's work] would ſend forth *Labourers* into the *Harveſt*. *Go your ways* (ſaid he) *behold I ſend ye forth as Lambs among Wolves*, Luke 10. 2, 3. but then their *Commiſſion* was only to the *Jews*, and into ſuch *Cities* as he himſelf ſhould come, for he ſaid, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael: Freely ye have received, freely give*, Mat. 10. 5, 6, 8. by which we may obſerve, altho the *Jews* at that time did pay **Tithes**, and it was lawful for them ſo to do, *Luke* 11. 42. for *Chriſt* had not yet ſuffered, yet his *Miniſters* had no ſuch *Command* from him to receive them; but his *Command* was,

that

that they ſhould *Eat* and *Drink* ſuch things as were ſet before them, by thoſe that *received* them and their *Doctrine* only, for the *Labourer* is worthy of his *Meat*, or *Hire*, Luke 10. 7. 8. ſo his followers then (as well as now) were contented with his allowance, for they returned rejoycing, and could ſay they laked nothing; for without doubt, ſuch whoſe Hearts were *open* to receive them and their Doctrine, were *alſo open* to communicate to their *neceſſities*.

But when *Chriſt* had *ſuffered*, and roſe again, *finiſhing what he came to do*, John 19. 30. **then** he bid his *Miniſters* go and Teach *All Nations* (now, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*) what to do? To obſerve **All** *things whatſoever I have commanded you* (ſaith he) *and lo I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World*, *Matth.* 28. 19, 20. now if all things that *Chriſt* commanded were to be *taught* to all *Nations* to obſerve, how can any ſuppoſe this one *particular thing* concerning his *Miniſters Maintenance* ſhould be excluded from the reſt of things *commanded* by him, but now I will ſhew how far his *Miniſters* taught and obſerved his *Command* in this one point.

Paul that Eminent *Miniſter* and *Apoſtle*, writing to the Church at *Corinth* in his firſt

Epiſtle,

Epiſtle, Chap. 9. ſaith, *The Seal of mine Apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord*, verſ. 2. ſhewing that he had begotten them into a *lively Faith* in *Chriſt*, therefore ſpeaks as unto his *Children*, 2 *Cor.* 12.14. and queries with them, ſaying, *have we* (meaning his Fellow-labourers) *not Power to Eat and to Drink*, verſ. 4. *have we not Power to forbear working*, verſ. 6. and, *who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock?* Verſ. 7. then ſpeaking concerning the *Law*, ſaith, *thou ſhalt not muzzle the Mouth of the Ox that treadeth out the Corn*, verſ. 9. *being written for our ſakes* (ſaith he) *for the Labourer is worthy of his Reward*, 1 Tim. 5. 18. *and if we have ſown unto you ſpiritual things, is it a great thing if we ſhall reap your carnal things?* 1 Cor. 9.11. *and they which wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar; even ſo hath the Lord ordained, that they which Preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel*, verſ. 13, 14. alſo, *let him that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things*, Gal. 6. 6.

Now theſe are ſome of the Chiefeſt places of *Scripture*, that ſhews how far the *Goſpel-Miniſters* have Power to *partake* or *receive carnal things* of thoſe that they im-

parted *ſpiritual things unto*, and none other, wherein is not ſo much as a word of **Tithes** or *Tenths* named, nor yet any particular Allowance, *And having Food and Raiment* (ſaith he) *let us be therewith content*, 1 Tim. 6. 8. ſo by theſe Teſtimonies, it doth appear plainly, that there is an Agreement and Concurrence between *Chriſt* and his *Miniſters* concerning this thing.

Now how the *National Prieſts* can plead for **Tithes** or *Tenths* as due to *Goſpel-Miniſters* from *Scripture*, for my part I cannot underſtand, for there is not any *Command*, nor any *Example*, therein to be found, as I can perceive; and when ſome have been put to prove it by *Scripture*, it hath been too hard a task for them: But to claim it as their right, they preſently flee to the *Law* of the *Nation*; and ſay, that *That* will give it them.

But now I will alſo ſhew how the *Goſpel-Miniſters* obſerved what they taught, *Paul* (as before) ſhews how far their Power extended; *But* (ſaith he) *nevertheleſs, we have not uſed that Power, nor none of theſe things, but ſuffer all things leſt we ſhould hinder the Goſpel of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 9. 12. *neither have I written theſe things that it ſhould be ſo done unto me; for though I preach*

the

the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I Preach not the Gospel, vers. 15, 16. *for if I do this thing willingly, I have a Reward: But if against my will, a Dipensation of the Gospel is committed unto me. What is my Reward then? Verily, that when I Preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without Charge, that I abuse not my Power in the Gospel,* vers. 17, 18. so here is a *good Example* for a *Gospel-Minister*, altho' he had Power to partake of their *carnal* things, being the fruit of his *Ministry*, yet he rather chose to *work* with his *hands* to help to supply his *necessities*, than make use of his *Power* to them and some others, *Acts* 18. 3. & 20. 34. 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 1 *Thes.* 2. 9. 2 *Thes.* 3. 8. lest he should be *chargeable* or *burdensome* so as to abuse his *Power*, *for* (saith he) *I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you, and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 15. but sometimes he did make use of his *Power* of receiving *carnal* things in some other *Churches*, to supply his *necessities*, as appears in 2 *Cor.* 11. 7, 8, 9. and *Phil.* 4. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. also he left a *Charge* to those that were *Rich* in this *World*, to be *Rich* also in *good Works*, *ready to Distribute to the Saints necessities*, Rom. 12. 13. *and willing to communicate*

municate, 1 Tim. 6. 18. *for with such Sacrifice God is well pleased*, Heb. 13. 16. so by what hath been already said, it is evident that *Christ's Ministers* may lawfully *work* or *labour* with their Hands, and also have power to forbare *working* where they see it convenient; also, that they have *Power* to receive *Temporals* (if they lack) of those *only* that receive their *Ministry*; and farther, they *freely gave* as they had *freely received*; for a *necessity* was laid upon them to Preach the *Gospel*, whether they partook of *carnal* things or not.

But now if it were possible that the *National Ministers* could prove **Tithes** due by *Scripture*, unto true *Pastors*, *Teachers*, or *Ministers*, it would little avail them, except they could *prove* themselves such, by comparing their Lives and Practices with those that were truly so indeed, according to *Scripture*-Testimony, which I believe they cannot do, but rather will be found by this way of trial by *Scripture* (and I hope they will grant it is equal) to be in the steps of the false *Prophets*, *Ministers*, &c.

And to make this appear more plain, I will here *collect* some Testimonies concerning each of them apart out of *Scripture*.

I. Of

I. Of True *Prophets*, *Paſtors*, *Miniſters*, *Teachers*, &c. Their *Marks*.

SAmuel called all *Iſrael* to witneſs, and ſaid, *Whoſe Ox have I taken? Or whoſe Aſs have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppreſſed? Or of whoſe hand have I received any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith? And I will reſtore it you. And they ſaid, Thou haſt not defrauded us, nor oppreſſed us, neither haſt thou taken ought of any Mans hand:* And the Lord was *Witneſs* unto the Truth thereof, 1 *Sam.* 12. 3, 4, 5. And *David*, a *King* and *Prophet*, ſaid, *He was upright before the Lord, and had kept himſelf from his Iniquity, and the Lord recompenſed him according to the cleanneſs of his hands*, Pſal. 18. 23, 24. And farther ſaid, *Thy Word have I hid in my Heart, that I might not Sin againſt thee:* For *it is as a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path. For he had done the Commandments of the Lord, and loved and kept his Teſtimonies*, Pſalm 119. 11, 105, 166, 167. And the Lord ſaid unto *Jeremiah*, *Behold I have put my Words in thy Mouth*, Jer. 1. 9. And when he ſaw the *Word* of the *Lord* become a Reproach, he thought to ſpeak no

more in his Name; *But his Word was in mine Heart* (ſaith he) *as a burning Fire ſhut up in my Bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not ſtay*, Jer. 20. 9. And theſe *Prophets* of the *Lord, ſpake by his Spirit in them*, Neh. 9. 30. by which he *revealed his Secrets unto them*, Amos 3. 7. 1 Cor. 2. 10. And ſuch *declared his Word faithfully, what the Lord put in their Mouths*, 1 Kings 22. 14. And *Micah* ſaid, *Truly I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment, and of Might, to declare unto* Jacob *his Tranſgreſſion, and unto* Iſrael *his Sin*, Micah 3. 8.

Chriſt commanded his *Diſciples* to teach the Nations to obſerve his Commands (as aforeſaid;) but *firſt* they were to tarry until they were *endued with Power from on High*, Luke 24. 49. which after they had received, *Acts* 1. 8. & 2. 4. they went forth to *Preach freely*, and it was their *Care* to make the *Goſpel free, and without Charge*, as *Paul* ſaid, *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel, but his hands miniſtred to his neceſſities*, Acts 20. 33, 34. And it was alſo the Practice of others, as appears, 1 *Cor.* 4. 12. 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 9. & 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 8. And their *Gifts* were *Spiritual*, whether *Propheſie, Miniſtry, Teaching*, or *Exhortation*, 1 Cor. 14. 1. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. *For as every one had received the Gift, ſo they were to miniſter, as good Stewards*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. And

Paul

Paul was made a *Minister*, *not of Man*, *nor by Man*, Gal. 1. 1. *but according to the Gift of the Grace of God*, Eph. 3. 7. And their work was to *Turn People from Darkness to Light*, *from the Power of Satan unto the Power of God*, Acts 26. 18. Not that they were *Sufficient of themselves to do any thing*, but their *Sufficiency was of God*, *who made them able Ministers of the New Testament*, *not of the Letter*, *but of the Spirit*; *for the Letter killeth*, *but the Spirit giveth Life*, 2 Cor. 3. 5, 6. Now they *received the Spirit of God*, *by which* they knew *the things of God*, *which things they spake*, *not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth*, *but what the Holy Ghost teacheth*, 1 Cor. 2. 12, 13. And then they could say, to those that believed, *Ye are Witnesses*, *and God also*, *how Holily*, *and Justly*, *and Unblamable*, *we behaved our selves among you*, 1 Thess. 2. 10.

II. Of False *Prophets*, *Pastors*, *Ministers*, *Teachers*, &c. Their *Marks*.

Balaam was a *Prophet*, but his way was Perverse before the Lord, *Numb.* 22. 32. And *Peter* speaks of some that followed this *Balaam*, *which loved the Wages of Unrighteousness, but chiefly them that walk after the Flesh, and count it pleasure to Riot in the day time, having Eyes full of Adultery, and that cannot cease from Sin* [mark] *beguiling unstable Souls; an Heart they have exercised with covetous Practices*, 2 Pet. 2. 10, 13, 14, 15. which is *abhorred by the Lord*, Psalm 10. 3. it being *Idolatry*, Col. 3. 5. And the *Covetous*, *Idolaters*, Eph. 5. 5. They are those that the Prophet *Isaiah* compares to *greedy Dogs, that can never have enough; looking every one for his gain from his quarter*, Isa. 56. 11. And *such that teach for Hire, and divine for Mony; and he that putteth not into their Mouths, they even prepare War against him*, Mic. 3. 5, 11. *And they covet Fields* (or the Fruits thereof) *and take them by violence, having the Power* (or Law) *in their hand*, Like old *Eli*'s Sons, *that took Men's Goods by force. So they oppress a Man and his House, or Heritage*, Mic. 2.

1, 2. 1 Sam. 2. 16. *And by their means they bear rule; which is a horrible thing committed in the Land, but a People loved to have it so,* Jer. 5. 30, 31. *And say, speak unto us smooth things,* Isa. 30. 10. So these Prophets say, *Peace, Peace, and there was no Peace,* Jer. 6. 14. And say, *the Lord hath said, when he never spoke by them, nor sent them; yet they run, and propheſie lies in his Name, of the deceit of their own Heart,* Jer. 14. 14. and 23. 21, 25, 26, 30, 31. Which is likened to *daubing with untempered Morter, or ſewing Pillows under Peoples Armholes,* Ezek. 13. 7, 10, 11. These Prophets Conſpire together, *like a roaring* Lion, *ravening the Prey; they have devoured Souls, they have taken the Treaſure and precious things, they have made many Widows,* Ezek. 22. 25. *They ſcatter the Sheep, and feed themſelves with the Fat, and cloth themſelves with the Wool; but feed not the Flock, nor ſeek that which was loſt, or driven away, but with force and cruelty have ruled,* the true Prophets cried *Wo* againſt ſuch, *Jer.* 23. 1, 2. *Ezek.* 34. 2, 3, 4.

And *Chriſt* compared ſuch to *Ravening Wolves in Sheeps Clothing*, and bids us *Beware of them, for by their Fruits* (ſaith he) *ye ſhall know them,* Mat. 7. 15, 16. *For they love to go in long Clothing, and love Salutations in the Market-places, and chief Seats in the Synagogues,*

gogues, and the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts, and to be called of Men Rabbi, *or Maſter,* Mat. 23. 6,7. Mark 12.38,39. Luke 20.46. *Theſe are Murmurers, Complainers, walking after their own Luſts, and their Mouth ſpeaking great ſwelling Words; having Mens Perſons in admiration, becauſe of advantage,* Jude 16. who by their *Natural Knowledge* are become *brutiſh,* Jer. 51. 17. Jude 10. for it *puffeth up,* 1 Cor. 8. 1. and *the natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned,* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *They are of the World, therefore ſpeak they of the World, and the World heareth them,* 1 John 4. 5. *And the Traditions and Commandments of Men they teach for Doctrine,* and ſeem to *draw near God with their Mouths, and honour him with their Lips, but their Hearts are far away,* Mat. 15. 8, 9. *Teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre ſake,* Tit. 1. 11. *And through Covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned Words, make Merchandize of ſome; promiſing them liberty, while they themſelves are the Servants of Corruption,* 2 Pet. 2. 3, 19. Such *conſent not to wholſome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Doctrine, which is according to Godlineſs, but doting about Queſtions, and Strifes of Words, whereof comes Envy, Striſe, Railings,* &c. 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. *From ſuch withdraw thy ſelf.* Now

Now I have briefly inserted some of the *several* Marks mentioned in Holy Scripture, describing both the *true* and *false Prophets*, *Ministers*, &c. and in the last description it doth seem to appear, that the Physiognomy of the *National Ministers* is *most Discerned*, and therefore have we just cause to believe they are no true *Gospel-Ministers*.

But if any should suppose that this way of a general Proof or Trial is insufficient to render them no *Gospel-Ministers*, I shall also insert a few particulars, wherein they, and the *true Ministers of Christ*, are opposite in *Call*, *Life* and *Practice*.

First, *Christ* sends forth, and gives *Commission* to his *Ministers*; and they *approved* themselves as his *Ministers*, *in much Patience*, *in Affliction*, *in Necessity*, *in Distress*, &c. 2 Cor. 6. 4.

But these *National Ministers* are sent forth by *Man*, and their *Commission* they receive from *Man*, and by *Man's* Power they are upheld.

Secondly, *Christ's Ministers* preached *not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*, *but in Demonstration of the Spirit and Power*, *as they were taught by the Holy Ghost*, *and as that gave them utterance*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. 13. Acts 2. 4. Luke 12. 12. although several were mean Mechanicks.

But

But the *National Ministers* are fitted to their *Ministry* by the Wisdom and Study of *Man*, being partly educated at *Oxford* or *Cambridge*, their Learning and Studying of *Natural Languages*, *Arts*, *Sciences*, and *Philosophy*, and old *Heathen Authors*, the *Inventions* and *Traditions of Men*; who, by their *Natural* Industry and Parts, attain to their several Degrees, until they are thought of Ability to set up for themselves.

Thirdly, *Christ* sent forth his *Ministers* as *Sheep among Wolves*, and bid them *be as Wise as Serpents*, *and as Harmless as Doves*, Mat. 10. 16.

But some of the *National Ministers* rather appear to be in the Nature of *Wolves* themselves, *in Sheeps Clothing*; for their Works have *too evidently* manifested the same, by making *Havock* and *Spoil* of the *Goods* of their innocent and harmless Neighbours, and *violently* taking the same from them; and not only so, but sometimes casting their *Bodies* into Prison, and there have caused them to remain until the Expiration of their Days, because they could not for Conscience sake put into the Mouths of these that are greedy of *Filthy Lucre*, or such that seek *their gain from their quarter*.

Fourthly, Christ commands his *Ministers* to go from one Place, City, or Nation, to another,

ther, to inſtruct or teach the People, and promiſed *to be always with them to the Worlds end.*

But the *Prieſts* and *Biſhops* are limited within their particular *Dioceſſes* and *Pariſhes* great part of their Days, except ſometimes when a *large Benefice* is vacant, then ſome that have reſided in a *ſmaller Benefice* will ſtrive hard to get into it: So when there is a *Remove* from one place to another, it is to get *more Money* by the *bargain*; and unto ſuch calls as theſe (viz. *Come up higher*) their Ears are very attentive; but to forſake a *large Benefice*, and voluntarily take a *ſmall One*, I never yet heard of one that did it.

Fifthly, Chriſt's *Miniſters freely received their Miniſtry* from him, *and freely they gave* again.

But this is not the caſe of the *Prieſts* in our Days; for *they* (or their *Parents*) ſometimes are at *great Charges* and *Expence* in fitting them out to their *Trade* or *Miniſtry*, and Maintaining them at the *Univerſity* ſeveral Years; ſo that they cannot truly ſay, they have *freely* received their *Miniſtry*, neither do they *freely* give the ſame, but the People muſt *buy it*, ſuch as will have it, (and ſuch as *will not* are forced to pay) at a dear Rate, conſidering how little

it

it is worth: For from Seven Years to Seventy they remain confeſſing themſelves to be Miſerable Offenders, and that there is no *Health* in them; and this is an evident Token that the Lord never ſent them, becauſe they *turn the People from their evil ways*, Jer. 23. 22.

Sixthly, *Chriſt's Miniſters* were not to be as Lords over the Heritage of God, nor each other; *Chriſt* himſelf forbid it, and ſaid, *It ſhall not be ſo among you*, Mat. 20.26. 1 Pet. 5. 3.

But them of the *National Miniſtry* exerciſe Lordſhip over their Flocks, and each other; ſome being called *Lords Spiritual*, and receive or embrace the Title of *Right Reverend Father in God*— *Lord Biſhop of*— Which is contrary to the Miniſters of Chriſt.

If I ſhould recite all particulars that might be mentioned, wherein there is a diſagreement or contrariety between the true *Miniſters of Chriſt* in the Primitive Times, and the *National Miniſters* in our Days, it would much enlarge what I intend; therefore theſe particulars in this place may ſuffice, to ſhew the difference between them. So to conclude this part, I ſhall leave theſe four things for them to prove by Scripture, if they can.

1ſt.

1*st*. To make Proof that they are *Christ's Miniſters*, by taking his *Miniſters* for their Examples, or comparing their Lives and Practices with thoſe that were truly ſo in the Primitive Times, *Phil.* 3. 17. 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 7. 2 *Tim.* 4. 5.

2*dly*. That his *Miniſters* have any Power or Authority from him to take, where it is not freely given.

3*dly*. That his *Miniſters* may, or did contend, ſtrive for, or compel any to give them of the things of this World, although they did partake of their *Miniſtry*; for *a Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all Men*, 2 Tim. 2. 24.

4*thly*. And laſtly, That his *Miniſters* may or did ever force *Tithes* or Maintenance by Law, from any that did not receive Them, and their *Doctrine*, or *Miniſtry*.

Now if they can make *full Proof* of theſe four things by plain *Scripture*, this Controverſie about *Tithes* would ſoon be ended; for I believe there would be an *Univerſal Conſent* thereunto: But in the *Interim* I ſhall turn to my third and laſt Head or Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the Eſtabliſhment *of* Tithes *after the* Apoſtaſie *entered, with the Teſtimonies of ſeveral Ancient* Chriſtians *againſt the ſame:*

Being chiefly Collected out of J. Fox's Acts and Monuments, *vol.* 1. *old Impreſſion; a Book which, I ſuppoſe, moſt* Proteſtants *have a good eſteem of.*

Firſt, I Do not find that the *Primitive Chriſtians* paid or received *Tithes* throughout all the Ten Perſecutions, or about Three Hundred Years after Chriſt; but then the *Church* was *maintained* by the free benevolence of the People; as witneſſeth *Origen*, *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*, and alſo for the next Three Hundred Years, when *Heatheniſm* bore Sway in this *Nation*, which was till about the Year 600. about which time *Auguſtine* the *Monk* was ſent hither by *Gregory* (called) the Great, over from *Rome*, aſſiſted with ſeveral Preachers, to Convert the *Saxons* from *Paganiſm* to

to *Popery*; *Ethelbert* being then King of *Kent*, who was converted, and afterwards his Subjects: This *Ethelbert* is said to be very bountiful to *Auguſtine*, and gave him the Lordſhip of his *Chief City* of *Canterbury*, yet I do not find by Hiſtory, that he gave him *Tithes*, or commanded *Tithes* to be given him.

But about the Year of our Lord, 786. as it is reported, a *Council* being held in *Mercia* by two *Legates*, ſent from Pope *Hadrian* the Firſt, wherein *Tithes* were *Eſtabliſhed*, ſo it ſeems the firſt *Law* for payment of *Tithes* came from the *Pope*, and was agreed and conſented unto by *Offa*, being at that time King of *Mercia* (which was then about a ſeventh part of *England*) who by Counſel of his *Queen*, cauſed *Ethelbert*, firſt *King* of the *Eaſt-angles*, to be Slain upon falſe ſuſpition; and at length this *Offa* underſtanding the Innocency of *Ethelbert*, and the Heinouſneſs of the Fact, gave the *Tenth part* of his Goods to *Holy Church* in the remembrance of this *Ethelbert*, and built a *Monaſtery* beſides, endowing it with *Lands* and *Rich* Revenues for Maintenance of a Hundred *Monks*, thinking thereby to expiate or leſſen his Sins and merit Salvation, ſo afterwards went to *Rome* for his Pennance, where he gave the *Church* of St. *Peter* a

Penny for every House throughout his *Dominion*, *Acts* and *Mon.* vol. 1. p. 117.

And *Ethelwolf*, Son of *Egbert*, liking a Monkish Life, gave the *Church* the *Tithe* of all his *Goods* and *Lands*, page 122.

And also 'tis said that *Athelston* about *Anno* 924. caused his younger Brother, *Edwin*, to be set in an old rotten Boat, in the broad Sea, where he being *dismaied* with the rage of the Wind, cast himself over-board and was drowned; which done, *Athelston* the King, coming to remembrance of himself, was stricken with great *Repentance*, and underwent *Pennance* the space of seven Years together, and also built two *Monasteries*, and *decreed* that *Tithes* should be paid, hoping thereby to expiate his Sins; the Form of which *Decree* or *Law* was this,

I Athelston *King, charge and command all my Officers throughout my whole Realm, to give* Tithes *unto God of my proper Goods, as well in living Cattle, as in the Corn and Fruits of the Ground; and that my Bishops likewise of their proper Goods, and mine Aldermen, and my Officers, and head Men, shall do the same*; and he wills them to declare it to such as be under their Subjection, *&c. Acts* and *Mon.* p. 137.

Edgar also about 959. is said to have continued

tinued the payment of *Tithes*, who being a Man of a vitious Life, displaced married *Priests*, and brought in *Monks* of a single Life to possess their Places: He was a *Deflowrer* of *Virgins*, and other *lascivious Acts*; he also built and repair'd divers *Monasteries* and *Nunneries*.

Then *Canutus* the first *Danish King*, who being Guilty, or had consented unto the Blood of *Edmund* and *Edward*, Sons of *Edmund Ironside*, who being *Heirs* to the *Crown*; for which cause it is said, about 1016. he confirmed *Tithes*, and in great Devotion built and endowed the *Monastery* of St. *Edmond* (now called St. *Edmund's-bury*, in *Suffolk*) for the seeming *Ghost* of this St. *Edmund* often affrighted him.

So about this time (which was a time of great Darkness and Ignorance) several such like *Examples* might be produced, whereby the *Nation* came to swarm with several *Religious Orders* (so called) and *Monasteries*, *Nunneries* and *Abbies*, were *Erected* and Endowed with large *Revenues* and *Tithes* for their Maintenance, that the *Donors* or Givers thereof, might have their Sins remitted through the Prayers and Intercession of such that received them.

Now in this short Relation, there are three things worth Observation, *viz.*

1*ſt*, It was near 800 Years after *Chriſt*, before the firſt *Law* for payment of *Tithes* ſeems to be made in *England*.

2*dly*, *Tithes* were firſt given to the *Church* by the *Pope's Authority*, and confirmed by *Popiſh Kings* and *Princes*, that had been Guilty, or had conſented unto *Murder* or *Bloodſhed*, or ſome other *Heinous Offence*, for the moſt part.

3*dly*, *Tithes* were not given firſt to *Chriſt's Miniſters* to Preach the *Goſpel*, but to the *Popiſh Clergy*, as *Prieſts*, *Monks*, &c. to maintain them in their *Idle Superſtitious Practices*; in ſaying and ſinging of *Maſſes*, and praying for the Souls of their Benefactors, that thereby (as is ſaid) they might have their Sins remitted, and merit Salvation.

So it is evident, that this way of *maintenance* of *Miniſters* by *Tithes*, aroſe from the *Pope*, and was impoſed by his *Authority*, without any ground for it in the *New Teſtament*, nor yet *practiced* in the *Apoſtles* days, nor thoſe that ſucceeded them for ſome Hundred Years afterwards, until the Doctrine and Orders of the *Apoſtles* were neglected; and *Errors*, *Hereſies*, *Idolatrous*, and *Superſtitious Practices* came to take place.

But yet for a Thouſand Years after *Chriſt*, or more, it is obſervable that the Poor and Needy

Needy had a ſhare and part in the *Tithes* that was then given, for their Maintenance, which had ſome reſemblance to *Moſes*'s Law; but about this time the *Clergy* began to be ſo far degenerated from *Primitive Chriſtianity*, that much *Pride*, *Idleneſs*, *Superſtition*, *Covetouſneſs*, *Schiſms*, *Luxury*, and other *Evils* were crept into their *Church*, which might be the cauſe that ſeveral of the Hearts of the People were withdrawn from ſuch freedom in *Adminiſtring* their *Tithes* to the *Clergy*, but gave more to the *Poor*, thinking it better beſtowed without doubt; which the *Clergy* preſently perceiving, began to make *Laws* and *Decrees*, to compel the People to pay all to them, that they might fill their own Pockets; whereby the Poor came to be left deſtitute, and ſtill are, of that which was at firſt given as their Right.

One of the Synodal Injunctions of *Anſelmus*, Arch-Biſhop of *Canterbury*, 1106. was, *That no Tithes ſhould be given, but to the Church.* Acts and Mon. p. 176.

And about 1180. a *Council* being held under Pope *Alexander* the Third, obſerving the *Poor* to have much given them, made a *Decree* to reſtrain Peoples Freedom in that caſe.

And about 1215. at the *Council* of *Lateran*,

teran, under Pope *Innocent* the Third, it was decreed, *That Tithes ſhould be paid to the Parochial Prieſts.*

And alſo about 1270. at a *Council* at *Lyons*, under Pope *Gregory* the Tenth, it was conſtituted, *That it ſhould not thenceforth be lawful for Men to give their Tithes as they pleaſed, as they had done, but pay all to the Mother Church.*

Thus you ſee how the Covetous *Clergy* have, by *Popiſh Laws*, got all to themſelves (and robbed the Poor of their Right.) Nevertheleſs, in this time of Groſs Darkneſs, and Midnight of Popery, the Lord raiſed up ſome to ſtand as *Faithful Witneſſes* for him, againſt this *Anti-chriſtian Yoke* of **Tithes** and forced Maintenance, as well as other Superſtitious things: But for Brevity ſake, I ſhall only mention a few Teſtimonies to this purpoſe.

Arnulphus, Arch-Biſhop of *Lugdun*, who lived in the time of *Pope Honorius* the Second, 1127. to the *Clergy* he ſaid, "I Preach to "you the Truth, and blame your Pride, "Stoutneſs, Avarice, Incontinency, with "your unmeaſurable Greedineſs of getting "and heaping up Riches. With much more that they could not bear; therefore 'tis ſaid, "They privily took him, "and drowned him. *Teſtimony of the True Church of God*, pag. 97. *Gulielmus*

Gulielmus de St. Amore, a Chief Ruler of the *University* of *Paris*, about the Year 1260. in his 11th *Sign* of true and false Prophets, saith, "That true Apostles do "Preach only for God's Cause, and for "the Health of Souls, and for no Tempo-"ral Gain, but only to the Glory of Christ. "False Prophets do Preach upon some oc-"casion, as either seeking some Commo-"dity at the Hands of Men, or else be-"cause of getting Goods, Honour, and "Praise among Men. Therefore these evil "and naughty Preachers, which preach "for Worldly Gain or Honour, or else for "the Praise and Commendation of Men, "be no true Apostles, but false Prophets. And in his 18th *Sign*, saith, "That true "Apostles do not desire the Riches and "Goods of them to whom they preach (much less of those to whom they preach not) "whereby they are discerned from "Wolves, *viz.* from false Prophets; and brings *Paul*'s words, *Acts* 20. *I have desired no Man's Gold nor Silver, but his hands ministred to his necessities:* "This Example of La-"bouring *(saith he)* is a Spectacle for Bi-"shops. *Acts and Mon.* p. 290.

John Wickliff's 17th Article, for which he was Censured, was, "That Tenths (or *Tithes)* "are pure Alms, and that the Pa-"rishoners

" riſhoners may, for the offence of their " Curates, detain and keep them back, " and beſtow them upon others, at their " own Wills and Pleaſures. Upon which *Article* is a large Diſputation, in which is ſhewed what *Alms* is (viz.) " *Alms* is a " Work whereby any thing is given to " the Needy of Compaſſion for God's " ſake, *&c.* And alſo ſhews, " That *Tithes* " were the Tributes of poor Souls, and " that the *Clergy* were not Lords thereof, " but only *Stewards*; and if they abuſe the " ſame, they are Thieves, Robbers, and Sa- " crilegious Perſons. And in the Prayer and Complaint of the *Plowman*, which is thought to be the ſaid *John Wickliff*'s 'tis ſaid, " But Lord there cometh hired Men, " and they ne feeden not thy Sheep in thy " plenteous Leſew, but feeden thy Sheep " with Dreams, and falſe Miracles, and " Tales, but at thy Truth they ne come " not; for Lord I trow thou ſendeſt them " never: Lord, of theſe hired Men, ſpeak- " eth *Jeremy* the Prophet, and thou ſayeſt " that Word by him, I ne ſent them not, " and they run quickly; I ne ſpeak unto " them, and they propheciden. *John Hus* maintained *J. Wickliff*'s Opinions, and ſealed the ſame with his Blood, at *Prague*, in *Bohemia*.

William

William Swinderby, one of his Articles was, "That *Tithes* purely be *Alms*; and "that any Perſon that doth give his *Alms* "to any, which in his Judgment is not in "neceſſity, doth Sin in ſo giving it. And in his *Appeal* to the *King*, ſaith, "Chriſt's "Law bids to miniſter Spiritual Things "freely to the People; the *Pope* with his "Law ſells for Money, as Pardons, Or-"ders, Bleſſings, Sacraments, Prayers, Be-"nefices, and *Preaching* to the People, "*Anno*, 1389.

Walter Brute, which is ſaid to be a Man having the mighty Operation of *God's Spirit* in him, his 4th *Article* was, "That no "Man is bound to give *Tithes* nor *Oblations*; "and if any Man will needs give, he may "give his *Tithes* and Oblations to whom "he will, excluding thereby their Cu-"rates. — In his *Vindication*, ſaith, "It is "plain that the *Tithes* were given to the "Sons of *Levi*, for their ſerving in the "Tabernacle, and in the Temple of the "Lord, as the firſt Fruits were given to "the Prieſts, and alſo their Sacrifices; and "ſo were the Vows of their *Miniſtry*, as "it appears in the Book of *Numbers*, Chap. "22. But, for as much as the Labour of "thoſe Sacrifices did ceaſe at the coming "(or Suffering) of Chriſt, how ſhould

"thoſe

" thoſe things be demanded, which were " ordained for that Labour? And ſeeing " that the Firſt Fruits were not demand- " ed of Chriſtians; which Firſt Fruits " were then rather and ſooner demanded " than the *Tithes*. Why muſt the *Tithes* " be demanded, except it be, therefore " peradventure, becauſe that the *Tithes* be " more worth in value than the Firſt " Fruits? And farther, "Wherefore ſeeing " that neither Chriſt, nor any of the Apo- " ſtles commanded to pay *Tithes*, it is ma- " nifeſt and plain, neither by the Law of " *Moſes*, nor by *Chriſt*'s Law, Chriſtian " People are bound to pay *Tithes*; but by " the Traditions of Men they are bound. With much more upon this Subject.

William Thorp, in his Examination before the Arch Biſhop of *Canterbury*, 1407. ſaith, " That the *Arch-Biſhop* charged him with " Preaching openly and boldly at *Shrews-* " *bury*, that Prieſts have no Title to *Tithes*. part of his anſwer was, " That in the " old Law (which ended not fully till the " time that Chriſt roſe up again from Death " to Life) God commanded *Tithes* to be " given to the *Levites*, for their great " Buſineſs and daily Travel that pertained " to their Office; but Prieſts, becauſe their " Travel was much more eaſie and light

" than

" than was the Office of the *Levites*, God
" ordained that the Priests should take the
" 10th part of those *Tithes* for their live-
" lihood; but now (I said) in the new
" Law, neither Christ nor any of his A-
" postles took *Tithes* of the People, nor
" commanded the People to pay *Tithes*,
" neither to Priests nor to Deacons: -- He
" speaketh, that *Gregory* the 10th commanded
" new *Tithes* to be paid unto Priests,-- and
" also Christ taught the People to do
" Alms, that is works of Mercy to poor
" needy Men (of Surpus, that is, Super-
" fluous of their Temporal Goods) " which
" they had more than needs to their ne-
" cessary livelihood; and thus, I said, not
" of *Tithes*, but of pure Alms of the People,
" Christ lived and his Apostles, when they
" were so busie in preaching the Word of
" God to the People, that they might not
" travel otherwise to get their livelihood;
" but after Christ's Ascension, when the
" Apostles had received the Holy Ghost,
" they travelled with their hands to get
" their livelihood, *&c.* -- *The* Arch-Bp. *said*,
" thinkest thou this wholesome Learning
" to sow openly, or yet privately, among
" the People? Certain this Doctrine con-
" trarieth plainly the Ordinance of Holy
" Fathers, which have ordained, granted

" and

" and licenſed Prieſts to be in divers de-
" grees, and to live by *Tithes* and Offe-
" *ings* of the People,

William Thorp, " If Prieſts live vertuouſly,
" by the Example of Chriſt and his Apoſtles,
" without *Tithes*, &c. the People would
" give them freely ſufficient livelihood.

A Clerk ſaid, " How wilt thou make this
" good, that the People will give freely to
" the Prieſt their livelihood, ſince that now
" by Law every Prieſt can ſcarcely conſtrain
" the People to give them their livelihood?

William Thorp, " Sir, it is now no wonder
" tho' the People grudge to give Prieſts the
" livelihood they ask; much People know
" how that Prieſts ſhould live, and how
" that they live contrary to Chriſt and
" his Apoſtles; the poor needy People
" are forſaken and left of the Prieſts to be
" ſuſtained of the Pariſhioners, as if the
" Prieſts took nothing of the Pariſhioners
" for to help the People withal; ſo the
" Pariſhioners pay their Temporal Goods
" twice, where once might ſuffice, if Prieſts
" were true Diſpenſators, *&c.*

Now if theſe faithful *Witneſſes* and *Martyrs* of *Jeſus* have obtained ſuch a good Report for their Conſtancy, as they have amongſt *Proteſtants*, Why ſhould not their Teſtimonies be thought worthy to be regarded?

garded? For doubtleſs, in what they have here declared concerning *Tithes*, they had the *Holy Scripture* on their ſide; and not only ſo, but the *Spirit* of the Lord in meaſure did aſſiſt and encourage them to *Declare* and *Teſtifie* againſt thoſe things which at this day are upheld and vindicated, and That by Thoſe that ſeem to have an *honourable Eſteem* of theſe *firſt Reformers*, though in Life and Practice *conform* not therewith, but are found in the ſame ſteps of thoſe they *teſtified againſt*.

But to this purpoſe I will farther add part of the 15th Article of the *Bohemians* againſt the *Uſurping Power* of the *Clergy* in their day -- *(viz.)* "That they receive *Tithes* of Men, and "will of right have them, and preach "and ſay that Men are bound to give "them *Tithes*, and therein they ſay falſly, "for they cannot prove by the *New Teſta-* "*ment* that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt com- "manded it, nor his Diſciples warned no "Man to do ſo, neither did themſelves "receive them; but although in the *Old* "*Teſtament* it were commanded to give "*Tithes*, yet it cannot thereby be proved "that Chriſtian Men are bound thereto, "for this Precept of the *Old Teſtament* had "an end in the firſt Year of *(or after)* "our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, like as the pre-

"cept

" cept of *Circumciſion*: Wherefore well-
" beloved, conſider and ſee how your *Bi-*
" *ſhops* ſeduce you, and ſhut your Eyes
" with things that have no proof: *Chriſt*
" ſaid in the 11*th* of *Luke*, *Give Alms of*
" *thoſe things that remain*; but he ſaid not,
" Give the 10*th* of the Goods which ye
" poſſeſs, *but give Alms*, &c. *Anno* 1430.

Now by ſome of theſe foregoing Teſtimonies, it ſeems that *Tithes* were at firſt given alſo among ſome *Chriſtians*, upon no other account or ground, than they did give *Alms*, being left to every Man's freedom, which ('tis ſaid) was *divided by the Biſhop*, part to the *Prieſt*, and part to the *Poor*, but through Cuſtom and Uſage, and the *Clergies Covetouſneſs*, they at laſt became enforceable by their *Laws* and *Decrees*, and to be paid to another Uſe than for which they were at firſt given, and ſo have continued until this Age, through ſeveral *Changes* of *Government*; for *Generally* theſe cunning **Tithe-mongers** can ſet their *Sail* to the Wind, let it ſit how it will, ſo that by it they may have their *own* Corn ground, or bring *large profit* to themſelves, for if we look a little back until the Reign of *Hen.* 8. *King* of *England*, we ſhall find a great *Difference* and *Contention* between Him and the *Pope*, inſomuch

insomuch that at last he denied the *Pope's Supremacy* and *Authority*, and it was *abolished* in *England* by *Parliament*, and an *Act* made which gave the *King* all *Religious Houses*, with all their Lands and Goods, and the *Clergy* took an *Oath* that they would *Renounce the Pope's Authority*, and Swore to be true to the *King*, his *Heirs* and *Successors*; they also acknowledged their holding their *Bishoprick* of the *King* Only, Petitioning him to make Restitution of the *Temporalities* of the said *Bishopricks*; so they then acknowledged the King to be *Supreme Head of the Church*, as they had done the *Pope* before; so this *King* with his *Parliament*, made two *Acts* for the recovery of *Tithes*.

After him reigned his Son *Edward* the 6th, in whose Reign, *Injunctions* were set forth for the pulling down, and removing of *Images* out of their *Churches*, and also the Book of *Common-Prayer* was established, and another *Act* made for the payment of * *Predial Tithes*.

* Such things as grow from the Ground, as, *Corn*, *Hay*, &c.

After him, his Sister, Queen *Mary* came to the *Crown*, she put down *Common-Prayer*, and set up *Popery* and *Mass* again; and the *Clergy* then Swore to be true to their *Holy Mother the Church of* Rome, *and their Holy Father*

Father the Pope, there being about three Hundred that ſuffered Death for *Religion* in her time; among which number, was of the *Clergy* about Twenty Six.

Queen *Mary* Dying, her Siſter *Elizabeth* came to the *Crown*; She put down *Maſs* again, and ſet up *Common-Prayer*, and ſhe was acknowledged to be the *Supreme Head of the Church*; and as many of the *Clergy* as refuſed to take the *Oath* to her, were turned out of their *Benefices*; which was but about One Hundred and Twenty *that refuſed*, in about Nine Thouſand (being not one in Seventy) ſo by their Conformity they ſtill retained their *Benefices* and *Tithes*, throughout the Reign of King *James* the Firſt, and *Charles* the Firſt, till the Year 1644. which was in the time of the *Long Parliament*, and then the *Common-Prayer* was denied and voted Down, and the *Directory* (ſo called) for publick Worſhip was ſet up, by a *Synod* of *Prieſts* then ſitting at *Weſtminſter*; the generality of the *Clergy*, rather than looſe their *Benefices*, did conform with this alſo; but then they having denied and renounced their *Ordination by Biſhops*, were not ſuch *Eccleſiaſtical Perſons* that by former Laws had power to demand *Tithes*: Alſo about this time there were many *Petitions* to the *Parliament*

liament againſt them, and much writing for their *Aboliſhment*; ſo theſe *Prieſts* (being quick ſighted in ſuch matters) preſently ſaw danger, and made their *Petitions* to the *Parliament* for *them*, and prevail'd againſt the many *Petitions* that were to the contrary; and then they ſued the People call'd *Quakers* for non-payment in *Oliver*'s name, at their *Courts*, *Aſſizes* and *Seſſions*, putting many in Priſon till Death, and making Spoil of their Goods.

And when King *Charles* the II. came to the *Crown*, and the *Common-Prayer-Book* was ſet up again; it is yet well known to many now alive, how that many of theſe *greedy Prieſts* did embrace it again for Lucre ſake, as *Divine Service*, although before they did reject it as *Idolatrous*; and ſince which time they have gotten other *Laws* made, to recover *The Oil that feeds the light of their Goſpel* (as one of them term'd *Tithes*) which *Laws* have by ſome of them been *executed unto great Severity*, on many of thoſe, that for *Conſcience ſake* cannot put into their Mouths.

In a Paper intitul'd, *The Dreadful Danger of Sacrilege.*

Thus it may be ſeen, what a *great eſteem* theſe Men have of their *highly applauded* Diana *of* Tithes, that generally they have

conformed to any *Power* that hath been uppermoſt, rather than loſe their *profit* and *gain* gotten by their *Craft*, which is as a *principal Pillar* to ſupport and uphold their *Miniſtry*; and the Foundation of this *Pillar* ſeems to ſtand on a bad Ground, not warrantable by *Scripture*, and many Thouſands are (and have been) *born up by it*, and if they perceive it to *totter* or *ſhake*, then for fear it ſhould fall, *ſpeedily* they call out for help of thoſe they would ſeem to be above, which hitherto hath been granted them; but if their help and ſupport ſhould come to be *withdrawn*, then down it would fall, and without Queſtion, many that is *born up by it*, would *tumble down with it*, for their Lives and Practices have but little *influence* upon the Hearts of the People, by which they ſhould be ingaged freely to *adminiſter* unto them, as *Goſpel-Miniſters*.

Now conſidering what I have here laid down concerning *Tithes*, I ſhall alſo annex ſeveral *Reaſons* why *I am perſuaded* the People called *Quakers* refuſe to pay the ſame unto the *Pariſh Prieſts*, endeavouring thereby to remove the opinion of ſome, that ſay it is only a pretended *Scruple of Conſcience*, or nothing of *Conſcience* in it.

Reaſon 1.

Reason 1. Because *Tithes* as they are now paid, appears to be inconsistent with all the *Examples* that can be produced from the *Old* or *New Testament*.

Reason 2. Because *Tithes* as they were paid by the *Jews* unto the *Levites*, was put an end unto by *Christ*, when he offered up himself an acceptable *Sacrifice* once for all, thereby *abolishing that Priesthood*, and the *Rites* and *Ceremonies* thereof; and to uphold and maintain the same still is *Jewish*, and to deny *Christ* come in the Flesh, therefore of *Anti-christ*, 1 *John* 4. 3.

Reason 3. Because *Tithes*, since *Christ*, hath been brought in, and set up in the *Church*, by the *Pope's Authority*, and commanded to be paid by *popish Kings*, *Princes*, *Councils*, &c. to uphold and maintain the *Clergy*, in that which *Protestants* count Superstition.

Reason 4. Because to pay *Tithes*, is to undervalue and do contrary to, or Censure the Generation of the Faithful, who have born Testimony against it, and suffered under *Popery* and *Prelacy* that upheld it.

Reason 5. Because by paying *Tithes*, is to uphold and maintain such a *Ministry*, that (with good reason) we believe is inconsistent with the *Ministry of Christ*.

Reason 6.

Reason 6. Because that in so doing, we shall be found *Hypocrites*, in putting our hands to help to uphold that thing, which we believe the Lord hath determined to cast down, and utterly abolish.

Reason 7. Because it is said, *Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind*; and, *whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, Rom. 14. 5, 23. And we are persuaded for the *Reasons* aforesaid, that we ought not to pay *Tithes*, and also believe that the *National Ministers* have no *just Right* to it; therefore to us it would be a *Sin* to pay it them.

Reason 8. Because we believe there is no *Law* that is, or can be made by Men, of greater *Power* or *Authority* than the *Law* of *God*, that is *truly written in the Heart and Conscience*, agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*; therefore we say, *Whither ought we not to obey God rather than Men?* **Judge ye**, *Acts* 4. 18. and 5. 29.

FINIS.